

Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of evaluating a threat posed by a substance, the method comprising the steps of:

- (a) ~~deploying a plurality of remote sensing units and a control unit adapted to automatically identify the substance;~~
- (a1) obtaining an image of the substance with one or more remotely controllable sensing units;
- (a2) transmitting the image of the substance from the one or more remotely controllable sensing units to a control unit configured to automatically identify the substance;
- (b) generating a report with the control unit, the report comprising an the image of the substance and identification information regarding the substance as determined by the control unit;
- (c) uploading the report, via the control unit, to a secure remote server via a system chosen from the group consisting of a cell phone network and a satellite phone network;
- (d) notifying, via the control unit, at least some members of a hierarchy of threat response and evaluation authorities, including threat response authorities and evaluation authorities, of the report, wherein the evaluation authorities include a plurality of experts having knowledge relevant to making a high-level threat assessment; and
- (e) ~~instructing allowing at least some members of the hierarchy of threat response and evaluation authorities, via the control unit,~~ to access the report on the remote server via a wide area network.

2. (Previously presented) The method as set forth in claim 1, further including the step of providing the remote server with evaluation tools for automatically evaluating the report in light of other relevant data.

3. (Currently Amended) A method of evaluating a threat posed by a substance, the method comprising the steps of:

- (a) ~~deploying a plurality of remote sensing units and a control unit adapted to automatically detect and identify the substance and provide a corresponding report, wherein the report includes a magnified image of the substance;~~
- (a1) obtaining an image of the substance with one or more remotely controllable sensing units;
- (a2) transmitting the image of the substance from the one or more remotely controllable sensing units to a control unit configured to automatically detect and identify the substance and generate a corresponding report, wherein the report includes a magnified image of the substance;
- (b) uploading the report, via the control unit, to a remote server via a system chosen from the group consisting of a cell phone network and a satellite phone network;
- (c) determining an actual geographic location of a remote sensing unit detecting the substance using a GPS device located on the remote sensing unit, communicating the actual geographic location to the control unit, and identifying an appropriate local reporting authority and an appropriate local reporting policy based upon the actual geographic location of the remote sensing unit detecting the substance;
- (d) notifying, via the control unit, the appropriate local reporting authority of the report in accordance with the appropriate local reporting policy;
- (e) establishing determining, via the control unit, a hierarchy of threat evaluators, including the appropriate local reporting authority and a plurality of experts having knowledge relevant to making a high-level threat assessment; and
- (f) instructing allowing at least some members of the hierarchy of threat evaluators to access the report on the remote server via a wide area network.

4. (Previously presented) The method as set forth in claim 3, further including the step of providing the remote server with evaluation tools for automatically evaluating the report in light of other relevant data

5. (Cancelled)

6. (Previously presented) The method as set forth in claim 1, wherein the response authorities are chosen from the group consisting of local first responders, state agencies, state departments, regional agencies, regional departments, national departments, and national agencies.

7. (Previously presented) The method as set forth in claim 1, wherein the evaluation authorities include experts on subjects chosen from the group consisting of medical issues relating to exposure to chemical substances, medical issues relating to exposure to biological substances, medical issues relating to exposure to radioactive substances, law, law enforcement, policy, doctrinal issues, historical cases, modeling, and simulation.

8. (Previously Presented) The method as set forth in claim 1, wherein the image of the substance is a microscope-magnified image.

9. (Previously Presented) The method as set forth in claim 1, further comprising collecting the substance with a sample examination cassette including:

- a roll of filter paper for receiving the substance;
- a roll of film providing an impermeable barrier for isolating the substance; and
- an archive spool for collecting the roll of filter paper and the roll of film.

10. (Previously Presented) The method as set forth in claim 1, wherein the remote sensing units are deployed by being airdropped into an area containing a potentially hazardous substance.

11. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 10, wherein the remote sensing units act to ~~properly physically orient themselves~~ upon hitting ground to properly position various operational elements of the remote sensing units for sample collection.